

# Fishing Tournament Fees

## Alternative Fee Structures

### Background

With the passage of 2003 Wisconsin Act 249, the Department of Natural Resources gained authority to promulgate rules to authorize and regulate fishing tournaments. Section 29.403(2)(p), Stats. establishes specific authority to write rules specifying fees for fishing tournament permits and for training or educational programs, including rules specifying reduced fees in appropriate circumstances. Currently, the Department issues fishing tournament permits free of charge.

In addition to the authority to promulgate rules regulating tournaments, the new legislation established the bass fishing tournament pilot program. Under this pilot program the Department must issue 4 permits per year to bass tournaments allowing participants to cull as part of a study to evaluate the impacts of culling.

At the January 26, 2005 meeting of the Natural Resources Board (NRB), the Department sought adoption of a rule establishing live well standards for tournament boats used in the bass fishing tournament pilot program (FH-55-04). The NRB tabled adoption of FH-55-04 pending submission of an evaluation plan for the bass fishing tournament pilot program, including a plan to finance the evaluation. The rule was brought back to the NRB at its February 22, 2005 meeting with the requested evaluation plan. Of primary concern to the NRB was the financing of the bass fishing tournament pilot program. The estimated cost of the evaluation is \$150,000 over two years. The breakdown presented was:

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>
Economic Impact Study (UW contract)	\$20,000	\$20,000
Biological Impact Study (UWSP contract)	\$45,000	\$45,000
Sociological Impacts	<u>\$10,000</u>	<u>\$10,000</u>
TOTAL	\$75,000	\$75,000

The Department proposed to pay for the evaluation by redirecting funds from fisheries projects planned for 2005 and 2006, and from donations received from tournament fishing organizations. The Department received a donation of \$15,000 from ESPN/BASS and Mercury Marine, and a donation of \$5,000 from FLW Outdoors. The proposal included matching donated funds with a permanent reallocation of \$20,000. It was proposed that the remaining \$90,000 needed to pay for the pilot program evaluation was to be recovered from future fishing tournament permit fees.

In addition to recovering the cost of the bass fishing tournament pilot program, requiring fees for fishing tournament permits in Wisconsin would provide the fiscal support necessary to make the fishing tournament permit program self-sustaining, and cover the cost of education and training programs related to fishing tournaments.

This document provides the estimated cost of the Department's fishing tournament permit program, and provides alternative fee structures for fishing tournament permits with the goal of collecting funds sufficient to maintain the fishing tournament permit program and recover \$90,000 used to fund the bass fishing tournament permit program.

## Cost of the Fishing Tournament Permit Program

The estimated annual cost of the proposed fishing tournament permit program will vary depending on the level of Department activity associated with each permitted tournament, and the type and amount of staff required to carry out the level of activity. To estimate the cost, five potential functions related to administration of the fishing tournament permit program are identified (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Description of individual functions associated with administration of the WDNR fishing tournament permit program.

<b>Function</b>	<b>Description</b>
1. Tournament Permit Application Review & Approval	Includes review of application for completeness, review of tournament rules/format for appropriateness, review of date, time, and location for potential conflicts, addition of tournament-specific conditions, and personal contact with tournament organizer if necessary.
2. Fishing Tournament Data Collection	Includes attendance at pre-tournament meetings to provide information to anglers, collection of data from tournament-caught fish (e.g. length, weight, marking and recapture), observation of fish handling procedures.
3. Fishing Tournament Law Enforcement	Includes attendance at pre-tournament meetings, enforcing fishing tournament regulations and permit conditions, enforcing general fishing and boating regulations during the tournament, responding to complaints related to a fishing tournament, potential investigative follow-up if necessary.
4. Fishing Tournament Report Review	Includes review and summary of fishing tournament catch reports returned by organizers, providing verbal or written reminders to organizers to return reports, tracking down late reports when they occur.
5. Fishing Tournament Database	Includes entry of fishing tournament permit and reporting data into a centralized database, any follow-up with department staff or tournament organizers to clarify data and information, producing annual fishing tournament reports.

The cost of each function is estimated by assigning a specific job classification to each function, estimating the approximate time spent by the staff executing each function, and multiplying by the hourly salary and fringe rate. Travel and other expenses were added to functions where they were expected to be incurred. Table 2 contains the estimated cost of performing each of the five specific functions for one permitted fishing tournament. If all five functions identified in Table 1 were performed at a permitted fishing tournament, the estimated Department cost is approximately \$590. If all five functions were performed at each of 400 permitted fishing tournaments annually, the cost of the program would be nearly \$236,000 annually.

However, the Department will likely not perform all five of the identified functions for every permitted tournament. A more likely annual Department cost estimate is approximately \$76,000 (Table 3). This estimate assumes only two of the five functions (fishing tournament permit review and fishing tournament database) will be performed for all 400 permitted fishing tournaments. Fishing tournament report review by a senior fisheries biologist was assumed necessary for half (200) of the permitted tournament annually. The amount of law enforcement dedicated specifically to fishing tournaments was assumed to be equivalent to the law enforcement cost presented in Table 2

performed at 100 permitted tournaments. Fishing tournament data collection was assumed to be performed at 50 tournaments.

**Table 2.** Estimated cost of the WDNR fishing tournament permit program. Estimates are provided on a per permit basis. The annual cost estimate assumes all functions being performed at each of 400 permitted tournaments.

<u>1. Tournament Permit Application Review &amp; Approval</u>	<u>Cost / Permit</u>	<u>% of Cost</u>
Senior Fish Biologist time (\$20.00/hr)	\$ 20.00	
Fringe Benefit (salary x 48.3%)	\$ 9.66	
	<b>\$ 29.66</b>	<b>5%</b>
<u>2. Fishing Tournament Data Collection</u>		
Advanced Fish Technical time (\$17.50 x 4 hours)	\$ 70.00	
Fringe Benefit (salary x 48.3%)	\$ 33.81	
Travel (50 mile x 0.32/mile)	\$ 16.00	
Meals (9.00/meal)	\$ 9.00	
	<b>\$ 128.81</b>	<b>22%</b>
<u>3. Fishing Tournament Law Enforcement</u>		
Warden time (\$18.00 x 11 hours)	\$ 198.00	
Fringe Benefit (salary x 48.3%)	\$ 95.63	
Travel (50 mile x 0.32/mile)	\$ 16.00	
Boat Gas (15 gallons @ \$3.00/gallon)	\$ 45.00	
Meals (9.00/meal)	\$ 9.00	
	<b>\$ 363.63</b>	<b>62%</b>
<u>4. Fishing Tournament Report Review</u>		
Senior Fish Biologist time (\$20.00/hr)	\$ 20.00	
Fringe Benefit (salary x 48.3%)	\$ 9.66	
	<b>\$ 29.66</b>	<b>5%</b>
<u>5. Fishing Tournament Database (data entry and reporting)</u>		
LTE (15.00 x 2.5)	<b>\$37.50</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>TOTAL COST PER TOURNAMENT</b>	<b>\$ 589.26</b>	
<b>TOTAL ANNUAL COST (assuming all functions performed at 400 events)</b>	<b>\$ 235,705.60</b>	

**Table 3.** Estimated annual cost of the WDNR fishing tournament permit program. Individual annual estimates are provided for five separate functions. The calculations assume 400 permitted tournaments annually. Functions correspond to those in Tables 1 and 2. Annual cost is the product of estimated cost per tournament from Table 2 and the estimated number of permitted tournaments which the specified function would be performed.

<u>1. Tournament Permit Application Review &amp; Approval</u>	<u>Annual Cost</u>
All 400 permits	\$ 11,864.00
<u>2. Fishing Tournament Data Collection</u>	
50 tournaments annually	\$ 6,440.50
<u>3. Fishing Tournament Law Enforcement</u>	
100 tournaments annually	\$ 36,363.40
<u>4. Fishing Tournament Report Review</u>	
200 permits	\$ 5,932.00
<u>5. Fishing Tournament Database</u>	
All 400 permits	\$ 15,000.00
<b>Total Annual Cost</b>	<b>\$ 75,599.90</b>
<b>Cost per permit</b>	<b>\$ 189.00</b>

## **Alternative Fee Structures**

Prior to evaluating the actual mechanisms by which to collect fishing tournament permit fees, a policy decision regarding the proportion of the fishing tournament permit program that should be covered by fishing tournament permit fees needs to be made. That decision is required to determine the amount to be collected by fishing tournament permit fees annually. The first alternative is based on the principle that the fishing tournament permit program as outlined above should be completely self sustaining. The second alternative is based on the principle that a portion of the cost of the fishing tournament permit program as outlined in this document should be funded by general fisheries management funds. The former was likely the intent of the legislature in 2003 Wisconsin Act 249 and considers the fishing tournament permit program as an independent additional work load. The latter considers the fishing tournament permit program as a more integrated component of the department's fisheries management program.

The Wisconsin DNR created a fishing tournament advisory committee (FTAC) to assist in promulgation of rules authorized by Act 249. The committee has been very active during the past two years, meeting eleven times since August 2004. Tournament fees have been a source of great debate within the committee. Two distinct mechanisms were discussed by the committee; those being tournament permit application fees that would be paid by the tournament organizer upon applying for a permit, and fishing tournament participant permits that would be required for individual anglers to participate in a permitted fishing tournament. The committee was generally favorable of the individual participant permits because it would spread the cost and responsibility across many individuals. Based on analysis, the individual participant permits would also likely be the most efficient way to both recover the cost of the pilot program and raise the funds necessary to sustain the fishing tournament permit program. However, the support for the individual permits was not unanimous within the committee, and will likely not be unanimously accepted by the public.

### Assumptions of Alternatives Analyses

The following data were summarized from the current Wisconsin DNR fishing tournament permit database to be utilized in calculations for fee structure alternatives. During 1999-2005, there were 1,482 permitted fishing tournaments that specified the number of boats or participants, and submitted tournament catch reports to the department. Of those, 677 were for open water fishing tournaments and 805 were ice fishing tournaments. Using the proportion of tournaments in each of three size categories within both open water and ice fishing tournaments observed in this data set, the average number of tournaments per year was estimated (Table 4).

The FTAC agreed with the principle that if a permit application fee structure was established a 'stepped' approach should be created that charges higher fees for larger events. The number of 'steps' or categories presented in Table 4 are somewhat arbitrary.

Other specific assumptions used in the calculations for alternatives include:

- Annual estimates assume 400 permitted fishing tournaments annually.
- In alternatives that utilizing the 'stepped' fee structure, the tournament size categories presented in Table 4 are used.
- The cost of maintaining the fishing tournament permit program at the 400 permit level is \$76,000.
- Five years to recover the \$90,000 cost of the bass fishing tournament pilot program is acceptable.
- There are 5,000 open water fishing tournament anglers in Wisconsin.

**Table 4.** Wisconsin fishing tournament permit information 1999-2005 by three size categories based on the number of boats for open water fishing tournaments (top panel) and number of anglers for ice fishing tournaments (bottom panel). Data summarized includes: the number of tournaments permitted over the entire time period, the percent of fishing tournaments in each category, the average number of fishing tournaments annually over the time period, and the average number of fishing tournaments expected if 400 are permitted.

<b>Open Water</b>			
<b>Number of Boats</b>	<b>Number of Tournaments</b>	<b>Percent of Tournaments</b>	<b>Average # per 400</b>
≥ 100	48	3%	13
50-100	157	11%	42
≤50	472	32%	128

  

<b>Ice Fishing</b>			
<b>Number of Anglers</b>	<b>Number of Tournaments</b>	<b>Percent of Tournaments</b>	<b>Average # per 400</b>
≥ 300	56	4%	15
100-300	247	17%	67
100	502	34%	135

#### ALERNATIVE 1: Fishing Tournament Permit Application Fees Paid By Tournament Organizer

*Alternative 1A. ENTIRE FISHING TOURNAMENT PERMIT PROGRAM SUSTAINED BY FISHING TOURNAMENT PERMIT APPLICATION FEES PAID BY TOURNAMENT ORGANIZERS. Use fishing tournament permit application fees paid by tournament organizers at the time of application to collect funds necessary to cover the entire estimated cost of the fishing tournament permit program (\$76,000 annually; Table 3) and to recover the \$90,000 cost of the bass fishing tournament pilot program evaluation in five years (\$18,000 annually) for a total of \$94,000 per year.*

The permit application fees required to raise approximately \$94,000 annually would range from \$200 to \$850 depending on the size of the fishing tournament (Table 5).

**Table 5.** Proposed alternative fishing tournament permit fee structure to collect approximately \$94,000 annually.

<b>Open water</b>			
<b>Number of Boats</b>	<b>Average # per 400</b>	<b>Cost per permit</b>	<b>Total Dollars per year</b>
≥ 100	13	\$850	\$11,050
50-100	42	\$415	\$17,430
≤50	128	\$200	\$25,600

  

<b>Ice Fishing</b>			
<b>Number of Anglers</b>	<b>Average # per 400</b>	<b>Cost per permit</b>	<b>Total Dollars per year</b>
≥ 300	15	\$850	\$12,750
100-300	67	\$415	\$27,805
≤ 100	135	NA*	

  

<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>			<b>\$94,635</b>
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\*The current rule proposal would not require permits for ice fishing tournaments with fewer than 100 participants.

Alternative 1A as proposed would successfully cover the entire estimated cost of the fishing tournament permit program described in Table 3. However, the permit fees required are relatively high. Although there are some large national and regional tournaments with large prizes that come to Wisconsin, most events are smaller, local, and often held as fund raisers for various causes. Fees ranging from \$200 to \$850 may be excessive given the nature of the majority of fishing tournaments in Wisconsin.

The FTAC members that organize and/or participate in fishing tournaments have been opposed to excessive permit application fees, while those on the committee that do not organize or participate in fishing tournaments have been relatively indifferent with respect to the specific fee amounts, rather they have stressed that the permit fees provide the funds necessary for the program to be self-sustaining.

*Alternative 1B. A PORTION OF THE FISHING TOURNAMENT PERMIT PROGRAM SUSTAINED BY FISHING TOURNAMENT PERMIT APPLICATION FEES PAID BY TOURNAMENT ORGANIZERS. Use fishing tournament permit application fees paid by tournament organizers at the time of application to collect funds necessary to cover the estimated cost of permit application review, report review and database (\$33,000 annually; Table 3) and to recover the \$90,000 cost of the bass fishing tournament pilot program evaluation in five years (\$18,000 annually) for a total of \$51,000 per year. Use general fish and law enforcement funds (approximately \$43,000 annually) to cover fishing tournament data collection and law enforcement components of the permit program.*

The permit application fees required to raise approximately \$51,000 annually would range from \$50 to \$525 depending on the size (in number of boats or anglers) of the fishing tournament (Table 6).

**Table 6.** Proposed alternative fishing tournament permit fee structure to collect approximately \$51,000 annually.

<b>Open water</b>			
<b>Number of Boats</b>	<b>Average # per 400</b>	<b>Cost per permit</b>	<b>Total Dollars per year</b>
≥ 100	13	\$525	\$ 6,825
50-100	42	\$275	\$ 11,550
≤ 50	128	\$ 50	\$ 6,400
<b>Ice Fishing</b>			
<b>Number of Anglers</b>	<b>Average # per 400</b>	<b>Cost per permit</b>	<b>Total Dollars per year</b>
≥ 300	15	\$525	\$ 7,975
100-300	67	\$275	\$18,425
≤ 100	135	NA*	
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>			<b>\$51,075</b>

\*The current rule proposal would not require permits for ice fishing tournaments with fewer than 100 participants.

Alternative 1B takes into consideration that fishing tournament anglers contribute to the general funds used for fisheries survey work and fisheries law enforcement work through their purchase of fishing licenses (Segregated Funds) and fishing gear (SFR Funds), and the policy decision that it is appropriate to use \$43,000 from those general funds to pay for Department activities related fishing tournaments. It assumes such a policy decision is acceptable.

Potential justification of a policy decision to allocate general fisheries and law enforcement funds to tournament management include that the Department's law enforcement efforts are often broad when in the field. Conservation Wardens likely would perform multiple activities while on the water during a fishing tournament, such as boating safety enforcement and fishing regulation enforcement, along with fishing tournament regulation enforcement. In addition, any data collected by Department fisheries staff would provide information used to better understand and manage fisheries as a whole, not just fisheries for tournament anglers. On the contrary, fishing tournament enforcement comes at a cost to other enforcement activities.

The FTAC position on alternative 1B would be similar to alternative 1A, with the addition that some members (those that do not organize or participate in tournaments) strongly disagreed with the principle of appropriating general fisheries and law enforcement dollars toward fishing tournament management. Tournament organizers and participants on the FTAC felt strongly that tournaments deserved some allocation from general funds.

#### ALTERNATIVE 2: Fishing Tournament Participant Permit Fees Paid by Tournament Anglers

The principle of individual anglers being required to purchase a fishing tournament participant permit is similar to that of the Department's stamp programs. Requiring a fishing tournament participant permit only for anglers that fish in open water tournaments is a recommendation based on extensive discussion within the FTAC. It is common for ice fishing tournaments to have formats that require registration only when a fish is entered into the tournament, therefore many anglers may fish the tournament but never officially enter, as it is not required. In addition, it was felt that ice fishing tournaments in general were less commercial in nature, and that the anglers that fish in them generally do so for the camaraderie rather than competition.

To determine the revenue that could be expected from requiring individual open water tournament anglers to purchase a permit, knowledge of the number of open water tournament anglers in Wisconsin is required. The current fishing tournament permit database indicated the average number of open water fishing tournament participants annually during 1999-2005 was 8,754. However, it is likely that anglers participate in multiple tournaments annually, thus this estimate is likely high with respect to the number of participant permits that would be sold. Additionally, new rules may change this estimated number. Therefore, Table 7 provides estimates of annual revenue for numbers of open water tournament anglers ranging from 1,000 to 10,000. In addition, Table 7 provides estimated annual revenue for permit fees of \$5.00 and \$10.00.

For the purpose of these analyses, it is assumed that 5,000 anglers participate annually in open water fishing tournaments, which is equivalent to each angler fishing an average of 1.75 tournaments annually ( $5,000 \times 1.75 = 8,750$ ).

**Table 7.** Estimated annual revenue collected by fishing tournament participant permits required for all open water fishing tournament anglers to participate in permitted open water fishing tournaments. Five different estimates of the number of anglers that would purchase a participant permit and two different permit fees are presented.

Number of open water tournament anglers	Fishing tournament participant permit fee	Total annual revenue
1,000	\$5.00	\$ 5,000
2,500	\$5.00	\$12,500
5,000	\$5.00	\$25,000
7,500	\$5.00	\$37,500
10,000	\$5.00	\$50,000
1,000	\$10.00	\$10,000
2,500	\$10.00	\$25,000
5,000	\$10.00	\$50,000
7,500	\$10.00	\$75,000
10,000	\$10.00	\$100,000

*Alternative 2A. ENTIRE FISHING TOURNAMENT PERMIT PROGRAM SUSTAINED BY FISHING TOURNAMENT PARTICIPANT FEES PAID BY TOURNAMENT ANGLERS. Use fishing tournament participant permit fees paid annually by open-water tournament anglers to collect funds necessary to cover the entire estimated cost of the fishing tournament permit program (\$76,000 annually; Table 3) and to recover the \$90,000 cost of the bass fishing tournament pilot program evaluation in five years (\$18,000 annually) for a total of \$94,000 per year.*

If it is assumed that 5,000 fishing tournament participant permits will be sold annually, the permit fee required to raise \$94,000 would be **\$18.80**.

*Alternative 2B. A PORTION OF THE FISHING TOURNAMENT PERMIT PROGRAM SUSTAINED BY FISHING TOURNAMENT PARTICIPANT FEES PAID BY TOURNAMENT ANGLERS. Use fishing tournament participant permit fees paid annually by open-water tournament anglers to collect funds necessary to cover the estimated cost of permit application review, report review, and database (\$33,000 annually; Table 3) and to recover the \$90,000 cost of the bass fishing tournament pilot program evaluation in five years (\$18,000 annually) for a total of \$51,000 per year. Use general fish and law enforcement funds (approximately \$43,000 annually) to cover fishing tournament data collection and law enforcement components of the permit program.*

If it is assumed that 5,000 fishing tournament participant permits will be sold annually, the permit fee required to raise \$51,000 would be **\$10.20**.

Fishing tournament participant permits were generally acceptable to the FTAC membership. It was more acceptable than the much higher fishing tournament permit application fees to members that participate or organize fishing tournaments. The FTAC members that do not participate in tournaments were less concerned with the fee collection mechanism and more concerned with the fishing tournament permit program being entirely self-sustaining and not subsidized by general fish and law enforcement funds.



ALTERNATIVE 3: Combine Both Fishing Tournament Permit Application Fees Paid by Tournament Organizers and Fishing Tournament Participant Permit Fees Paid by Tournament Anglers

*Alternative 3A. ENTIRE FISHING TOURNAMENT PERMIT PROGRAM SUSTAINED BY A COMBINATION OF FISHING TOURNAMENT PERMIT APPLICATION FEES PAID BY TOURNAMENT ORGANIZERS AND FISHING TOURNAMENT PARTICIPANT FEES PAID BY TOURNAMENT ANGLERS. Utilize a combination of fishing tournament permit application fees and fishing tournament participant permit fees to collect funds necessary to cover the entire estimated cost of the fishing tournament permit program (\$76,000 annually; Table 3) and to recover the \$90,000 cost of the bass fishing tournament pilot program evaluation in five years (\$18,000 annually) for a total of \$94,000 per year.*

Based on the assumption that 5,000 anglers would be required to purchase fishing tournament participant permits annually at \$10 each, participant permits would raise **\$50,000** annually, leaving \$44,000 to be raised by fishing tournament permit application fees. Table 8 provides a structure by which to accomplish that.

**Table 8.** Proposed alternative fishing tournament permit fee structure to collect approximately \$44,000 annually by permit application fees.

<u>Open water</u>			
Number of Boats	Average # per 400	Cost per permit	Total Dollars per year
≥ 100	12	\$425	\$ 5,525
50-100	57	\$225	\$ 9,450
≤50	113	\$60	\$ 7,680
<u>Ice Fishing</u>			
Number of Anglers	Average # per 400	Cost per permit	Total Dollars per year
≥ 300	15	\$425	\$ 6,375
100-300	67	\$225	\$15,075
≤ 100	135	NA*	
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>			<b>\$44,185</b>

\*The current rule proposal would not require permits for ice fishing tournaments with fewer than 100 participants.

*Alternative 3B. A PORTION OF THE FISHING TOURNAMENT PERMIT PROGRAM SUSTAINED BY A COMBINATION OF FISHING TOURNAMENT PERMIT APPLICATION FEES PAID BY TOURNAMENT ORGANIZERS AND FISHING TOURNAMENT PARTICIPANT FEES PAID BY TOURNAMENT ANGLERS. Utilize a combination of fishing tournament permit application fees and fishing tournament participant permit fees to collect funds necessary to cover the estimated cost of permit application review, report review, and database (\$33,000 annually; Table 3) and to recover the \$90,000 cost of the bass fishing tournament pilot program evaluation in five years (\$18,000 annually) for a total of \$51,000 per year. Use general fish and law enforcement funds (approximately \$43,000 annually) to cover fishing tournament data collection and law enforcement components of the permit program.*

Alternative 3B results in funds from fishing tournament permit application fees covering the estimated annual cost of permit application review, report review, and database costs (\$33,000; Table 9).

**Table 9.** Proposed alternative fishing tournament permit fee structure to collect approximately \$33,000 annually by permit application fees.

<u>Open water</u>			
<b>Number of Boats</b>	<b>Average # per 400</b>	<b>Cost per permit</b>	<b>Total Dollars per year</b>
≥ 100	13	\$300	\$ 3,900
50-100	42	\$150	\$ 6,300
≤50	128	\$65	\$ 8,320

  

<u>Ice Fishing</u>			
<b>Number of Anglers</b>	<b>Average # per 400</b>	<b>Cost per permit</b>	<b>Total Dollars per year</b>
≥ 300	15	\$300	\$ 4,500
100-300	67	\$150	\$10,050
≤ 100	135	NA*	

  

<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$33,070</b>
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\*The current rule proposal would not require permits for ice fishing tournaments with fewer than 100 participants.

Assuming 5,000 anglers will be required to purchase a fishing tournament participant permit annually at a cost of \$5.00, **\$25,000** would be raised annually. At a \$25,000 per year pace, the \$90,000 cost of the pilot program could be recovered in approximately four years. The grand total collected annually from permit application fees in Table 9 (\$33,070) plus the participant fees collected (\$25,000) equals **\$58,070**.

This approach would allow the participant permit to be eliminated upon successful recuperation of the \$90,000 cost of the bass fishing tournament pilot program.

### **Training and Education Expenses**

The current fishing tournament rule draft does not contain training or education requirements for fishing tournament organizers or participants. The FTAC has discussed possible future training and education activities but with the work associated with the bass fishing tournament pilot program and rule development, chose to hold off for the time being. Initial discussions focused on providing training and educational opportunities to interested organizers and anglers to start rather than immediately establishing requirements. Members of the FTAC have been active in providing training for tournament organizers in the past and appear to be willing to continue into the future if the Department can support such activities. The FTAC will likely work in the future to formally establish a training and education program for fishing tournament organizers and participants.

### **Conclusions**

The alternative fees structures for the fishing tournament permit program provide here are by no means the only possible fee structure alternatives. The data presented in this document could be utilized to explore other options, however given the short time frame in which to complete the analysis, these represent a reasonable range of alternatives for consideration.

Based on the work of the FTAC, a fee structure that includes a fishing tournament participant permit seems appropriate. However, regardless of what is ultimately proposed, fishing tournament permit fees will likely be one of the most controversial aspects of the proposed fishing tournament rules.

None of the states that border Wisconsin charge fees for fishing tournament permits. In a relatively limited search of other states, tournament permit fees appear to be relatively rare. I have found two states that charge tournament permit fees. The state of Maine charges permit fees of \$12 for a 'catch, measure & release' tournament and \$52 for a 'weigh tournament'. The state of Washington charges a \$24 application permit fee. The state of North Dakota requires payment of a 'conservation fee' equal to a minimum of 10% of the gross proceeds from the tournament participant entry fees to a maximum of \$5,000. Tournaments with no entry fee are still required to pay a \$5,000 conservation fee unless there is no cash payout. The conservation fees must be utilized for fishery conservation or public access projects approved by the game and fish director.

At this point, I believe that several alternatives should be presented to the public at hearings, with the hearing results guiding the final decision.

## **APPENDIX – Alternatives discussed by the FTAC but not recommended for review by the NRB.**

The alternatives below were considered to be too complicated to implement and thus not recommended for review by the NRB or at public hearings.

### Fishing Tournament Permit Application Fees Based on Prize Values or Entry Fees

The FTAC also discussed a fee system that would tie the permit fee amount to the prize values or participant entry fee. In general, it was felt that such a fee structure would attribute the cost somewhat in relation to the extent of commercialization by a fishing tournament. Thus, tournaments with high prize values and/or high participant entry fees would be charged the higher tournament permit fees.

Utilizing data from the existing fishing tournament permit database, during 1999-2005, the average total value of prizes was \$6,903 per permitted fishing tournament. Fishing tournament permit data from 2004-2006 estimated the average fishing tournament entry fee at \$63.36. Three potential alternatives that tie fishing tournament permit fees to total prize value and participant entry fees follow.

*Alternative 4A. Charge a fishing tournament permit fee at the percent of total prize value sufficient to collect funds necessary to cover the entire estimated cost of the fishing tournament permit program (\$76,000 annually; Table 3) and to recover the \$90,000 cost of the bass fishing tournament pilot program evaluation in five years (\$18,000 annually) for a total of \$94,000 per year.*

In order to collect \$94,000 annually, the average permit fee (assuming 400 permits) would need to be \$235, which, given the average prize value of \$6,903, is **3.4%**.

*Alternative 4B. Charge a fishing tournament permit fee at the percent of total prize value sufficient to collect funds necessary to cover the estimated cost of permit application review, report review, and database (\$33,000 annually; Table 3) and to recover the \$90,000 cost of the bass fishing tournament pilot program evaluation in five years (\$18,000 annually) for a total of \$51,000 per year. Use general fish and law enforcement funds (approximately \$43,000 annually) to cover fishing tournament data collection and law enforcement components of the permit program.*

In order to collect \$51,000 annually, the average permit fee (assuming 400 permits) would need to be \$127.50, which, given the average prize value of \$6,903, is **1.8%**.